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Self-Censorship and New Voices in Pizarnik's Unpublished Manuscripts*

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Ya no es eficaz para mí el lenguaje que heredé de unos extraños.[1]
Dirán que andas por un camino equivocado, si andas por tu camino.[2]

This article analyses self-censorship, within the broader context of self-editing, in a range of unpublished manuscript material by Argentinian poet Alejandra Pizarnik (1936-72).[3] Pizarnik's self-editing, in part influenced by anticipation of negative critical reception, is determined by her own restrictive concepts of what constitutes publishable literature. From the mid-sixties onwards, her letters and diaries bear witness to her increasing difficulty in continuing to write in what had become her trademark and categorizable mode, that of the 'poeta lírico amenazado por lo inefable y lo incomunicable'.[4] She repeatedly expresses desires to write in prose, and her manuscripts of the time experiment with many prose voices ranging from ludic to erotic, from Parisian *flâneur* to self-chronicler. Yet these new voices inevitably force Pizarnik to confront and transgress her own previous notions of literature, and of what is appropriate for publication in her literary context. The outcome of these internal conflicts is anxious self-editing, which—particularly as regards sexuality—shades into self-censorship.

Determining which texts the poet herself actively witheld from publication, and which were simply considered unfinished is problematic. Pizarnik's family and Ana Becciu clearly exercise censorship of her diaries—existing manuscript diary entries for much of January 1970 (box 2 folder 9) pertaining to Pizarnik's relationship with Silvina Ocampo are omitted from the published *Diarios*, as is her diary for 1972 (box 3 folder 1) which centres on her relationship with Martha I. Moia—and it is likely that similar external censorship was in operation with Pizarnik's prose and poetry texts

*I gratefully acknowledge the support of the AHRC Research Leave scheme (Grant Ref. AH/F014813/1) in undertaking this research, and the helpful comments of the BSS anonymous reader.
[1] Alejandra Pizarnik, *Prosa completa*, ed. Ana Becciu (Barcelona: Lumen, 2001), 61, referred to subsequently in the text as *Prosa*.
[2] Antonio Porchia, *Voces* (Buenos Aires: Hachette, 1978; 1943), 26.
[3] Material from the Alejandra Pizarnik Papers, C0 395, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
See http://diglib.princeton.edu/ead/eadGetDoc.xq?id=/ead/mss/C0395.EAD.xml&query=kw%3A(Pizarnik).
Subsequent references will be in the form (box # folder #), with handwriting distinguished from typewriting by fonts. I thank AnnaLee Pauls at Princeton for bibliographical assistance.
[4] Alejandra Pizarnik, *Diarios*, ed. Ana Becciu (Barcelona: Lumen, 2003), 413, referred to subsequently in the text.

after her death, with the result that although, as Catherine Grant observes, changed conditions of production and reception allowed the transgressive work *La bucanera de Pernambuco o Hilda la polígrafa* to be published posthumously in 1982, other prose texts, particularly those with a lesbian focus, have to this day remained unpublished.[5] Nevertheless, it is still viable to talk of self-censorship within the overall ongoing process of self-editing, since there is clear manuscript evidence of deletions and suppressions clustering around particularly sensitive and intimate issues.

Grant's conclusions about why the majority of *La bucanera* was not published in Pizarnik's lifetime are further supported by the Princeton material that has subsequently become available to scholars, to be discussed here. As Grant argues, Pizarnik 'managed to alienate […] her […] literary advisors, or at least made the[m] unwilling to consider this collection of texts as "worthy" of literary publication, and of taking up their place alongside the poet's earlier, "consecrated" body of work.'[6] Carolina Depetris, analysing Pizarnik's deliberate 'rutina poética diferente' after 1968 (which includes *La bucanera*) likewise documents how this 'viraje, incluso una revulsión en el trabajo poético de Pizarnik' brings her into conflict with her potential readership.[7]

Contemporary reviewers were certainly making negative judgements about the change in direction Pizarnik's work was taking. A review of *Extracción de la piedra de la locura* (1968) urges Pizarnik to be more self-critical: 'una autocrítica debe imponerse como coherente acción del estímulo más profundo. Así lo pide la poesía y tantos admiradores frecuentes que se interesan por la eternidad de Alejandra Pizarnik'.[8] This reviewer invokes an abstract and undefined notion of poetry to imply that *Extracción…* (the last three texts of which turn towards surrealistic extended prose) is aesthetically inferior, and will not elevate her to poetic immortality.[9] Note the potential ambiguity of 'la eternidad de Alejandra Pizarnik'; perhaps such admirers are equally anxious to preserve the

[5] Catherine Grant, 'A Private Revolution? Alejandra Pizarnik's *La bucanera de Pernambuco o Hilda la polígrafa*', *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 5:1 (1996) 65-82, (pp. 72-3, 76).
[6] 'A Private Revolution?', 75.
[7] Carolina Depetris, 'Alejandra Pizarnik después de 1968: la palabra instantánea y la "crueldad" poética', *Iberoamericana*, 31 (2008), 61-76 (p. 62).
[8] *La Nación*, 10 April 1968.
[9] This attitude persists in a review of Pizarnik's *Obras completas* (Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 1991). María Rosa Lojo comments that 'Corresponde hablar de "lenguaje", más que estrictamente de "poesía" porque hay textos como "Los poseídos entre lilas" o "La bucanera de Pernambuco", que desbordan lo estrictamente poético […] y despliegan un extraño arte de la obscenidad verbal'. 'Una voz detrás de las voces', *La Nacion*, Section 4, 7 July 1991, p. 5.

established myth of Pizarnik herself, conflating her with the 'niña extraviada' who wanders disconsolately through the 'pulcro trabajo lírico' of her earlier poems.[10] A review of *El infierno musical*, the last major collection published in her lifetime, is similarly critical: 'el resultado parece inferior al de sus anteriores libros, ya que éste carece de la precisión casi alucinante, matemática, tan característica de la autora.'[11] By framing the criticism in terms of not matching up to what has become her characteristic style, the reviewer effectively strait-jackets her into that mode and concept of poetry.

Pizarnik's desire to explore different voices not surprisingly increases, in reaction to such critical pressure, but so too does self-censorship. This combination of defiance and lingering deference to the aesthetic order to which she had formerly subscribed can be seen by comparing how Grant and Depetris interpret a group of quotations from *La bucanera* addressed to the reader. Both critics begin by quoting the following representative sentence: 'Lectoto o lecteta: mi desasimiento de tu aprobamierda te hará leerme a todo vapor' (*Prosa*, 94). Grant reads through this and other challenges to the reader a 'mocking unease', whereas Depetris sees 'absoluto desinterés por el receptor de sus escritos y por una relación probable de comunicación con él'.[12] I shall argue that Pizarnik oscillates between these positions, experimenting with 'escribir para la mierda' but then self-censoring this writing.[13]

~~MUNDOINMUNDO~~ ***El no-amor*** (box 7 folder 38): **ineffability and the impossibility of love**

the most poetic is precisely that which cannot be written down[14]

[...] un testimonio que yo ~~daré sobr~~ *debo dar*
sobre la imposibilidad del amor.
(Pizarnik, Box 6, folder 27, unpublished)

The characteristic, 'consecrated' style largely favoured by Pizarnik's critics presupposed a notion of poetry in which love is not possible, both it and language being doomed to failure, to ineffability or

[10] Depetris, 'Alejandra Pizarnik después de 1968', 62.
[11] *Clarín*, 12 March 1972.
[12] 'A Private Revolution?', 74; 'Alejandra Pizarnik después de 1968', 66.
[13] 'Alejandra Pizarnik después de 1968', 68.
[14] Virginia Woolf, *Orlando*, (London: Virago, 1993; 1928), 165.

'*l'incommunicabilité*': 'las palabras no hacen el amor / hacen la ausencia'.[15] The poem quoted, 'En esta noche, en este mundo', was published in Pizarnik's lifetime and epitomizes this view of poetry, whereas 'Solamente las noches', which contains an uncharacteristically positive and intimate image 'en esta noche, en este mundo / abrazada a vos' (*Poesía*, 427, dated 1972) remained unpublished in her lifetime. In the here and now of this night (Pizarnik's adoptive realm) and this world, literature carefully crafts and precisely corrects the expression of what escapes words and cannot be written, an unsatisfied and unsatisfiable desire whose emblem is 'la [sed] que no se refiere al agua, la que sólo se sacia en la contemplación de un vaso vacío' (*Diarios*, 342). But although by the mid-sixties Pizarnik is finding this view increasingly 'asfixiante' (*Diarios*, 355), reader reception confirms 'En esta noche, en este mundo' as one of her most powerful and successful poems, effectively trapping her within this aesthetic of ineffability and the impossibility of (expressing) love.[16]

Among those close to Pizarnik who encouraged her defiant efforts to explore new voices was her one-time lover, Martha I. Moia.[17] As Depetris points out, Moia—interviewing Pizarnik—draws attention to Pizarnik's change in aesthetic, saying 'ya no buscas esa exactitud'.[18] Pizarnik's responses are cagey; when Moia presses her about 'lo mucho que escribís', as if wanting Pizarnik to expound her new aesthetic, Pizarnik's self-censoring silence about her current writing ('…') is eloquent.[19] Nevertheless, elsewhere Pizarnik rises to the challenge, placing a question by Moia as an epigraph to one of the three manuscript versions of 'Diversiones púbicas': '¿Por qué no escribís como hablás?' (box 7 folder 1), then proceeding to dedicate a fifteen-page 'canto' to 'M.', in which—with clear intertextual reference to 'En esta noche, en este mundo', which was explicitly dedicated to Moia—she goes beyond her own previous aesthetic boundaries, by succeeding in

[15] Depetris' term, 'Alejandra Pizarnik después de 1968', 63. Alejandra Pizarnik, *Poesía (1955-1972)*, ed. Ana Becciu (Barcelona: Lumen, 2000), 398-9, referred to subsequently in the text.
[16] A review of *Los pequeños cantos* (Caracas: Árbol de fuego, 1971) calls this poem 'hermoso y logrado' and says that 'la colección bien vale por sólo esos versos verdaderos'. *La Nación*, 30 April 1972.
[17] Moia perhaps also encouraged Pizarnik's Fulbright application; as 'Coordinadora de Becas' for the Fulbright Commission, Moia wrote to inform Pizarnik of an award to participate in the Iowa Writers' Workshop (box 8 folder 25, 8 June 1971), but Pizarnik did not feel able to make the journey. Cristina Piña, *Alejandra Pizarnik: una biografía* (Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 1991; 2nd edn 1999), 195.
[18] 'Alejandra Pizarnik después de 1968', 70.
[19] The interview was published in *La Nación* 11 February 1973 and *Plural*, 18 (1973), 8-9.

writing more colloquially and speaking about love.[20] This is a radical departure from the earlier Pizarnik, whose poetry 'is hardly characterized by an interest in anything that could be called romantic or sentimental motifs'.[21] Such aesthetic transgression, in addition to the intimate contextual frame, explains why Pizarnik did not publish it; nevertheless it is ambiguously situated on the border between private communication and public literature, being called a 'canto', borrowing a key line from Garcilaso's third *Égloga*, quoting her own published poem 'Origen', and visually evoking a poetic style with deliberate spacialization of short lines.

Also unpublished was the untitled text charting the end of this relationship with Moia, footnoted as '*dernier poème avec M.I.M. - ag. o sept. 1972*' (box 6 folder 39). This intimate and raw poem traces the trajectory of Pizarnik's relationship, not only with Martha, but with her own ability to overcome her previous aesthetic strictures. It begins with the notion of loss, figured as the physical presence of an absence (so much a trope of her earlier public poetic persona), which makes the poet's speaking body vanish:

> escribo con la ausencia, la presencia de la ausencia que de pron [sic]
> pronto encarna y me hace de humo.

The new poetic voice, which at Moia's urging was coloquial, humorous and spontaneous, and was able (albeit with difficulty) to speak about love, is gone, leaving the utter vulnerability of unrequited love:

> perdido el humor, solo
> queda mi amor ridículamente inaceptado bajo ningún punto de
> vista.

The poignancy of re-hearing the same music in changed circumstances (reminiscent of 'Los muertos y la lluvia', where on listening to an old record after her father's death, the poet says 'nada ha cambiado para Lotte Lenya y mucho […] para mí' [*Prosa*, 43], but then exclaims 'Oh el disco ha cambiado, y Lotte Lenya se revela envejecida' [*Prosa*, 44]), activates the dangerously *cursi* image of

[20] For an analysis of this canto 'todo entero para M.' (box 6, folder 35), see Fiona J. Mackintosh, 'Auto-censura y la imposibilidad del amor en Alejandra Pizarnik (1936-72)', in the forthcoming Actas del VIII congreso de la AEELH, 'A través de la vanguardia hispanoamericana: orígenes, desarrollo, transformaciones'.
[21] David William Foster, 'The Representation of the Body in the Poetry of Pizarnik', *Hispanic Review*, 62:3 (1994), 319-47, 339.

a couple holding hands, the trap into which love had led her. Pizarnik evokes that bygone happiness with reference to her old familiar images of shelter:

> quedan las canciones que escuchamos con las manos juntas – yo
> temblando de alegría porque vos eras mi casa, mi cueva, mi mad [sic]
> riguera, mi patria, mi puerto. . reposaba en tus ojos mirándome.

The difference is that in the aesthetic which ruled *Los trabajos y las noches* and other poetry from which these well-worn images stem, the refuge could be sought but never attained, whereas here the poet had found that refuge in the loved one, only to lose it. We are reminded of 'En esta noche, en este mundo', and of the lines 'la sinceridad absoluta continuaría siendo / lo imposible' when she goes on to say:

> he querido vivir un poema sobre lo imposible. te transformé en
> mi imposible aun tanto posible.

Because of this impossibility—her impossible love with Martha which nevertheless had become something possible, and the impossibility of living this experience as a poem (according to her restricted notion of poem)—she has no option but to effectively censor her new poetic self by returning to the circumscribed poetic world which Martha had encouraged her to abandon. This sterile world is evoked by the desert and emptiness, which recall the iconic personae 'la silenciosa en el desierto' and 'la viajera con el vaso vacío' (*Poesía*, 105) from *Árbol de Diana*.

> ahora vuelvo a la
> escritura, debilitada por un año de días de esperarte. vuelvo
> a la [two words deleted] al desierto y al vacío.

The process of seeking refuge from reality in familiar poetic tropes is cyclical; some ten years earlier, she had declared: 'a causa de mi sentimiento de abandono me encierro en mí, alentada por cierta literatura que me dice de la imposibilidad del amor' (*Diarios*, 232).

Another unpublished poem which Pizarnik appears to have held back from publication since it too (like the 'canto' and the 'dernier poème avec M. I. M.') transgresses the aesthetic limits of her published poetry, is the untitled poem beginning thus:

> *fuiste mi única patria*
> *mi lugar de reposo*
> *mi espacio adorable*

ahora mi desconcierto
alegría de haberte encontrado
agonía de saberte lejos
al alcance de cualquier criatura
que no sea yo [...]
yo que me quedo sin patria
en mi patria
vuelta repentinamente
mi lugar de exilio forzoso (box 6 folder 14)

This image of exile from the homeland (and by extension of searching for a homeland) recalls 'Piedra fundamental': 'Yo quería entrar en el teclado para entrar adentro de la música para tener una patria' (*Poesía*, 265). The difference is that never in her published poetry was the homeland so explicitly situated in another person; in earlier poems, exile had a vague sense of existential (and according to some critics, post-holocaust) rootlessness, but here the poet has lost her emotional homeland, and is paradoxically an exile within the 'patria', the patria of her desolate earlier poetic aesthetic. The bond (described elsewhere in the poem) between the poet and her addressee, had allowed an interpretation of, and interaction with, this world:

en este mundo cuyo sentido y destino
solo lo descubren dos que van juntos.

The wordplay on the anagram 'sentido / destino' had occurred several times in Pizarnik's published poetry, but always in accordance with her established aesthetic of incommunicability and failure. For example as the last line of 'Fragmentos para dominar el silencio' (*Poesía*, 223): 'Y yo no diré mi poema y yo he de decirlo. Aun si el poema (aquí, ahora) no tiene sentido, no tiene destino' and in 'Sala de psicopatología' (*Poesía*, 411): 'aquí estoy […] / persuadiéndome día a día / de que la sala, las almas puras y yo tenemos sentido, tenemos destino'. Its recurrence in this unpublished poem, however, seems to suggest that 'dos que van juntos' succeeded in fulfilling her previously unfulfilled poetic striving after sense and purpose. The demonstrative adjective, 'este' in 'este mundo' is very important, since precisely because of the mutual support and shared adventure which is here associated with 'this' world, Pizarnik cannot publish this poem. It goes beyond the strict aesthetic parameters of Pizarnik's circumscribed world, and although she now wishes to escape this

asphyxiating world, she has doubts that the result can be publishable 'literature', and it is therefore subject to self-censorship.

Such internal struggles often emerge rhetorically in her published poetry, for example 'Ayúdame a no pedir ayuda' (*Poesía*, 222). But the earlier manuscript draft of a similar poem, the published version of which ends with 'y no es verdad que pediré socorro' (*Poesía*, 329), shows that what has been deleted in the revision process is precisely the linking of love with 'este mundo': 'y no es verdad que pediré socorro / ~~por un volcán recién nacido en la tierra promisoria / y no es verdad que te amaré en este mundo~~' (box 6 folder 27). Pizarnik's deliberate rhetorical ambivalence of forcefully assertive negation, further negated through erasure, communicates to us that (writing about) love must be censored in this poetic world.

Sexuality and Eroticism

> Nada de lo que publiqué hasta ahora me expone. He suprimido mis temas centrales: – el orgasmo – poesía y orgasmo… (*Diarios*, 489)

Not only is the notion of love subject to aesthetic self-censorship in Pizarnik; sexual references are likewise censored in the revision process. For example, the typescript of 'Escrito en el crepúsculo' is reduced by half before publication (*Poesía*, 437), and most of the deletions are of material which is either lavatorial punning like that which characterizes *La bucanera*: '~~Señoras y señores cultos. Vosotros los que entráis, dejad toda castidad, *señoras y señores culos*~~' or explicitly sexual: 'Que parece morir ~~el día que coje~~. Que parezco agonizar ~~en tanto eyacula~~.'; '~~El angel del retrete consoló al que lloraba con la verga en mano~~' (box 6 folder 35). There is a clear struggle going on here between the 'acceptable' aesthetic of the published poetry, and the 'nueva Poética' (*Prosa*, 153) in which sex will become as insistent a presence as it was previously absent or latent. By publishing without editorial notes the purified version of such poems, Becciu's 'clean' edition of the *Poesía* tacitly reinforces the sense of a stark aesthetic contrast between the public and private faces of Pizarnik, whereas in the unpublished material we see significant overlaps, transitional texts at the interface between the two aesthetics.

One such unpublished text, reproduced below, inhabits this liminal zone where key tropes of her published poetry (such as the night as 'el lugar de la cita', poetry as her substitute for religion, and experience as 'inadjetivable') give way to an insistence on sexuality, particularly androgynous or lesbian sexuality, via an eroticization of her admired prose writers. Death, childhood and silence (also recurrent topoi in her published poetry) are—along with love and life—associated with a masturbatory fantasy which results in sexually explicit encounters. I quote this one text in full since it is so representative of this violent transitional space in which we see Pizarnik speaking with her new voice.[22] This voice is voraciously sexual and ambiguously gendered, still alludes to universal literary figures (though their names are now distorted as they are relentlessly in *La bucanera*) but also deliberately situated in a concrete place (Buenos Aires) and in intimate relation to individuals, given by their first name (Silvina [Ocampo?], Cristina [Campo?] and Marta [Moia?]). Such intimate details were rigorously excluded from her earlier more universal aesthetic, except in titles, attribution of epigraphs or dedications.

> un ramo de siemprevivss pknzonosas [siemprevivas ponzoñosas]
> un nudo de escorpione para cogitar a solas con mis queridos muertos,
> la noche, al principiob mi claustro, mi cordero, mi inri, fue la
> poesia.. dicho de otro modo: unico modo de reconsttituci½on de lo
> divino
> la noche no es más el lugar de la citsa [cita]
> znterd dorm½ia con una mis manitos adiestrada en escalas musicales
> como lsa torre más alt , con mis manos derecha entre las piernas,
> entonces empez ba la novel a, rodeada de bs1zac [Balzac], de flubauert [Flaubert],
> de rpount [Proust], de v ooolf [Woolf] y de jouce [Joyce] q ue me me digaban escenas
> de una delicadez inadje6ible..
> Me manualizaba durante hojras, entonctrabs al amo5 [encontraba al amor], a la vida, a
> a la muerte, a la il nfancia, todo en silemcio,b yo era deseado
> por u la reina cristina munida de un falo que la hacía sospd
> pecho sa de un pripapismo demon½ iaco, vpero me cojoa em tamtp [en tanto]
> upyoo le succion gba las tetas y obten½ia un liquido que no era
> leche ni vino sin j una droga, .. a veces v me dol½ia cuando me
> aculaba
> y luego ven½ia una muchachita vestida de muchachito, v.. woolf u or
> lando, no s½e, s½e w que la coj½ia como un carnicera hasta unos
> miniyos antes debdespedirnos en qje .e p ermit½ia tgratarme a como
> a heliodiasa:Mis palabras fin ales, antes de gritar como una es
> trangbulada en el espasmo concluyente (si, para iniciarse 5 minu6os
> despu~exs) yo le decía, moviéndo hábilmentev mi peque;o cu.o: Quiero
> ser tu puta.. Eso la enlowuec½ia.. No conseguiamos consoladores en

[22] All text [sic] with occasional tentative clarifications [thus].

esta puta ciu ad de buenos aires; lo hubiera llenado de leche hirvien
te, para quemarla, yo, el esp½iritu de la bondad.. Y a Si,vina hubie
se aplicado un consolador para ning½omanos de manerla de hacerla
doler, vida mía, de que mjef muera despiertta de sue;o y no habiendo
aprendido todo a medias u a cua cuartas…
pero solo se que amo a marta con o dil n sexxo .. con o sin .. la amor (box 6 folder 35)

Distinguishing between typing errors and verbal play is hazardous in this text. The splitting of words (such as 'sospd / pecho sa' for 'sospechosa' or 'es / trangbulada' for 'estrangulada') may be accidental or may reproduce what Ivonne Bordelois characterized as Pizarnik's idiosyncratic diction: 'entrecortaba imprevisiblemente sus palabras'.[23] Jouce may be an error for Joyce, but may also be a Joycean word-play with 'jouir'. The symbol ½ repeatedly appears where there should be an acute accent (presumably an accident of Pizarnik's skills with an Olivetti), but 'Un carnicera' may be a mistake or may deliberately add to the gender confusion already created by the phallic 'reina cristina', the 'muchachita vestida de muchachito' and the reference to Woolf's Orlando (famous for changing sex in the course of the novel).[24]

Such androgynous elements are a feature of various of Pizarnik's unpublished erotic texts, revealing Pizarnik's exploration of different aspects of sexuality in parallel to different voices and aesthetics. Indeed, when making notes on Breton's *Du surrealisme en ses oeuvres vives* (1953), she underlines the phrase 'la necesidad de reconstitución del Androgyne primordial' (box 8, folder 14). Amongst the typescripts for *La bucanera* we find 'Novedades eróticas para mi tía Marta Tiresias' (box 7 folder 1);[25] this text was excluded from Becciu's posthumously established sequence, presumably on the grounds that since it only appears in one of the four groups of unpublished texts from which *La bucanera* was subsequently assembled, whereas a core of other texts reappear in all four drafts, it might be supposed that Pizarnik had already decided not to include it.[26] 'Novedades' consists of a dialogue between 'la tía' and 'la niña Josefina' who titillates her aunt with punning erotic descriptions of her encounter with a man. The aunt's name 'Tiresias' (blind prophet of Greek

[23] Ivonne Bordelois, *Correspondencia Pizarnik* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1998), 15, referred to subsequently in the text as *Correspondencia*.
[24] This happened to Carol in *Los perturbados entre lilas*, as Pizarnik comments to Ivonne Bordelois: '¿Sabés que Carolina se convirtió en un hombrecito? […] ahora se llama Carol.' *Correspondencia*, 295.
[25] Perhaps referencing Guillaume Apollinaire's surrealist drama, *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* (1918), or—as the BSS reader of this article kindly suggests—T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922).
[26] In her unpublished diaries (box 3 folder 1), under the heading textos míos, Pizarnik puts the cryptic note: 'p.8 (censura) de […] texte erotique Ma Tiresias (archivé)'.

mythological fame who was a woman for seven years) gives rise to gender confusion throughout the text, with Josefina unsure whether to refer to herself and her aunt as 'nosotros' or 'nosotras'. Marta Tiresias has 'testículas' [sic], rather than 'testículos', which elicit curious questioning from Josefina, in the style of Little Red Riding Hood: 'Tía, ¿para qué tenés pel…?' The implied 'pelotas' are deftly avoided by the aunt completing the question as 'pelos', but Josefina insists: '¡Tía! ¿Y si te preguntase por qué tenés el equipo de mina piola y además un purretito reo y dos bolas?' Stylistically, the text differs from *La bucanera* in attempting to create pyschologically consistent (albeit sexually indeterminate) characters, which may explain Pizarnik's own exclusion of it. Other texts treating heterosexual eroticism humorously have likewise remained unpublished, for example the seven-page vignette 'DE ASPID su lengua de arúspice (inspirado en La maledicencia, del P. Coloma)', which details the erotic adventures of a Duque and Duquesa (box 6 folder 45), and 'Lunf.' (the last text in box 6 folder 45), which is a five-page description of a voracious sexual encounter between a 'pibe' and a 'mina' told entirely in *lunfardo*.

There are various possible reasons for why these diverse texts focusing primarily on sex and eroticism remained unpublished: perhaps Pizarnik's literary executors exercised an aesthetic value judgement on them in the light of her published corpus, which 'is not […] a specifically erotic, much less a pornographic, poetry' (Foster, 339). Or perhaps for Pizarnik herself—in this crucial transitional phase of her own conception of publishable literature—an insistence on individualized eroticism and sexual explicitness connotes a lesser literature than Poetry or the Novel. She sees that it has a literary role, and she is familiar with examples ranging from John Cleland's *Fanny Hill* to André Pieyre de Mandiargues' erotic récits (including his 'La marée', which she translates), but what she had published previously did not include this, and moving publicly into this area requires boldness.

That she was determined to write erotic prose is not in doubt, however. As she forcefully puts it, 'Ir hasta el fondo de lo erótico es mi única necesidad, es tal que no la diferencio de mí' (*Diarios*, 349). This uncompromising statement made as early as 1963 foreshadows the poem fetishized as Pizarnik's 'last', 'no quiero ir / nada más / que hasta el fondo' (*Poesía*, 453), which fuelled the

Pizarnik 'suicide-poet' myth, since it is usually read as a desire to plumb the depths of the ultimate mystery, death.[27] But this much earlier desire to 'ir hasta el fondo *de lo erótico*' (my emphasis) underlines that the obsession for almost the last decade of her life was as much eros as thanatos. Responding to texts such as those of Mandiargues was part of the process of seeking to define her own erotic voice.

Described as a 'fringe surrealist',[28] Mandiargues was known for his literary eroticism, and Pizarnik commented enthusiastically on his erotic *récit* 'Adive', which involves the surrealistic chance encounter of a bisexual female *flâneur* (Stéphanie) with another woman (Adive).[29] Symbols of androgyny and of animalian female sexuality (suggested by the name Adive which means dog) exoticize the anticipated lesbian encounter, which culminates with Stéphanie being mysteriously pleasured by 'une chienne'. According to Pizarnik, '*le mot erotisme a été vidé comme la caparace d'une tortue morte; à cause de ceux qui ne peuvent pas le reconnaître chez ceux qui n'ont pas peur de lui*' (box 6 folder 35). She identifies Mandiargues as one of the latter in his ability to '*configurer ce forêt de symboles orgasmales qui est Adive*', and her response to it is suitably charged: '*j'ai enragée de ne pas pouvoir aller à la fôret et m'ouvrir comme une chienne*'. Nevertheless, in the same way that Pizarnik occasionally found Octavio Paz to be too 'virile' a model in her earlier poetry, when it comes to eroticism, she can enthuse about 'Adive' with its shifting plural sexualities, but the submissive gender role of the female protagonist in 'La marée' or the 'mujer-objeto' (as Pizarnik aptly describes her, *Correspondencia*, 289) in *La motociclette* make for less congenial literary models. Significantly, in her largely literal translation of 'La marée' (where a man narrates obliging his younger cousin to have oral sex in a cave at high tide), Pizarnik modifies the narrator's claim to power over Julie, 'je pouvais tout lui *faire*' (22), to 'podía *intentar*

[27] See Ana María Rodríguez Francia, *La disolución en la obra de Alejandra Pizarnik* (Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 2003), 375-82.
[28] Jason Wilson, 'Alejandra Pizarnik, Surrealism and Reading', in *Árbol de Alejandra: Pizarnik Reassessed*, ed. Fiona J. Mackintosh with Karl Posso (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2007), 77-90, (p. 78).
[29] Published in *Mascarets* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), 109-50.

todo' (23). Furthermore, when he states '*J*'y resterai aussi longtemps que la marée montera' (referring to his penis in Julie's mouth), Pizarnik translates 'Permanecer*á* en ella en tanto la marea suba', objectifying the penis and distancing it grammatically from the narrating 'I'.[30] This disputing of phallic power reappears more humorously in 'Otoño o los de arriba', where Pizarnik and her neighbour Max's whistling contest implicitly offers Max's wife as the sexual prize: 'era como un falo de aire que Max y yo nos disputábamos en honor de Saaaaaara' [sic] (Box 7, folder 31).

Whether humorously or otherwise, Pizarnik is clearly searching for a more actively woman-centred voice, yet it is in the territory of specifically lesbian eroticism that Pizarnik's self-editing, in its acute ambivalence, becomes particularly self-censoring. Susana Chávez Silverman has noted an 'internalized homophobia' in Pizarnik's published work which leads to instances of 'horrific lesbian sexuality' and traces of 'lesbian autobiography as horror', whilst Sylvia Molloy describes Pizarnik as 'both honouring and defacing the sapphic monument'.[31] Grant observes many 'indirect references to lesbianism' in *La bucanera*,[32] whilst according to Juan-Jacobo Bajarlía, 'el tema del lesbianismo le interesaba tanto como el del ocultismo. Ambos, según ella, servían para descubrirse'.[33] The discoveries Pizarnik makes through writing lesbian sexuality are as much about her own notions of publishable literature as about her conflictual sexual identity.

There are many prose pieces with lesbian sexual encounters as their focus, none of which were published by Pizarnik (nor by her literary executors). In 'Harta del principio femenino...', Pizarnik at times expresses stark repulsion towards lesbianism, yet the handwritten corrections and additions indicate violent ambivalence:

> ~~Estoy~~ ~~H~~arta del principio femenino, araña lugubre o araña maravillosa, y no es que me considere salvada definitivamente de cualquier posible tentación de entrar en el nido de arañas de los ~~xxxxx~~ las ~~lesbianas~~ de Buenos Aires. ~~No me siento~~ ~~lesbiana~~ NO me siento ~~xxxxxxx~~ ni lo contrario. *(¿Qué podría sentir, si tu sólo ~~estás~~ yaces, si tus ojos lilas mataron su llama furiosa en St. Paul de Vince*[sic]*).* (box 7 folder 20)

[30] 'La marée', in *Mascarets*, 9-27 (p. 18); 'La marea', *Diálogos*, 30 (1969) 20-24 (p. 22).
[31] Susana Chávez Silverman, 'The Autobiographical as Horror in the Poetry of Alejandra Pizarnik' in *Critical Studies on the Feminist Subject*, ed. Giovanna Covi (Italy: Universita di Trento, 1997), 265–77 (pp. 270-3). Sylvia Molloy, 'From Sappho to Baffo: Diverting the Sexual in Alejandra Pizarnik', in *Sex and Sexuality in Latin America*, ed. Daniel Balderston and Donna J. Guy (New York and London: NYUP, 1997), 250-8 (p. 250).
[32] 'A Private Revolution?', 69.
[33] Juan-Jacobo Bajarlía, *Alejandra Pizarnik: Anatomía de un recuerdo* (Buenos Aires: Almagesto, 1998), 94.

The spider, traditionally associated with female creativity, is seen both positively and negatively, but the poet's lingering attraction to lesbianism is couched entirely in negative syntax. The manuscript insertion, however, endows the text with a frame which allows us, potentially, to read its message as a riposte to the 'tú' whose eyes no longer blaze (with reciprocated desire?). The heavily erased phrase about neither feeling lesbian nor the contrary is key for reading all of Pizarnik's unpublished sexual material. What she apparently objects to is being categorized as a lesbian, which has the same stifling fixity as being a 'poeta de lo inefable'. On the one hand her urge for a 'nueva Poética' and for escape from asphyxiating ineffability can be read contextually as a reaction to patriarchal models of literature in which gender politics are not problematized. But on the other hand, she does not wish to be fixed as a lesbian, hence her anxious scorn towards artistic women who have been categorized in this way: 'Gabriela Mistral y Marina Núñez del Prado […] Ambas feas, lesbianas y voluntariosas' (*Diarios*, 164). 'Harta del principio femenino...' then describes one Madame X who is seen as abhorrently decrepit compared to the narrator and her female companion who are 'tan frescas, tan lindas, sobre todo en relación a ella'. Madame X's flirtatious attentions arouse disgust in the narrator (reminding us of the published poem 'Violario', *Prosa*, 33), who explicitly imagines her 'aleteos de vieja concha como para morirse de asco'. Even the pity she finally feels for the older woman is cut abruptly short in the final line: 'Artimañas de las arañas. Que se vaya a la mierda'. Madame X is thus the demonized lesbian and this fixity (together with her age) causes repugnance, yet an ambiguous note remains as we remember from the opening line of the text that the 'araña' of the feminine principle can be either 'lúgubre' or 'maravillosa'.

The text 'nota 2. homos.' (box 7 folder 38), which begins with a poeticized description of the 'misterio vaginal', gradually becomes a more psychoanalytical exploration of the writer's attitude towards lesbian encounters, which she admits is 'altamente paradójico'. The only way in which Pizarnik really feels free to render homosexuality attractive is by cloaking it in otherworldly myth: 'La homosexual de *La sed*. Sus ojos [...] tenían un brillo tan mítico, una fijeza tan terrible, que hubiera querido levantarme e introducirme en la pantalla. Una mujer así no es homosexual, no es

nada. *Es de otro mundo*. Por eso aún vibro y me disuelvo de deseos de encontrarla' (*Diarios*, 150; my emphasis). This notion of 'otro mundo' is crucial; as with the poems for Martha Moia, speaking love—and particularly lesbian love—is taboo within the publishable poetic world summed up in 'En esta noche, en este mundo'. To speak lesbian love requires another poetic world, one which only fully comes into being (in literary historical terms) after Pizarnik's death.

This trope of a necessary otherworldliness resurfaces in the unpublished poem 'Diana de Lesbos' (box 7 folder 10), which exists in two versions, the second reduced by half in length. Pizarnik's self-censorship as she revises is clearly in evidence in this text, since some of the most sexually explicit passages are erased, some passages are rendered illegible (represented here by 'xx'), and other corrections betray ambivalence.

> DIANA *DE LESBOS* *revisar* *enero 1972*
> ~~Nuestra cama es una fosa~~. Sos el pretexto de mi último pacto con el silencio. Por gracia de tu concha no escribo más poemas. O tal vez me engaño. De la trampa del lenguaje a la de la lengua. Diana, soy peligrosa: no estoy en el mundo, ~~no quiero, no puedo estar en el mundo.~~ ~~Xx xxxxxxxx xxxxx~~ ~~asusta pero~~ *P*ronto me mataré. Tal vez a causa de mi lengua. Tal vez porque en verdad no me gusta tu concha ni la de nadie. […] Sos bella, Diana, y deberías estar ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ con una pija caliente adentro. Pero no hay muchas criaturas tan infusas de deseos sexuales como yo [...] Además, me gusta violarte, me gusta echarte de espaldas y meterte a la fuerza dos o tres dedos en tanto tu culo da cuentas por el dolor y eso me excita y esto te excita y despacito vas cediendo como ~~una tiernísima~~ *la* princesita de la más alta torre del castillo medieval de mis sueños más depravados, ~~quiero~~ *quiero* decir místicos. […]

The equivalent passage in the revised and self-censored version of 'Diana' (which drops the 'de Lesbos' identificatory tag and tones down the sexual content by substituting 'sexo' or 'abertura' for 'concha') is as follows:

> Sos el pretexto de mi último pacto con el silencio. Por *culpa de* tu ~~xxxxx~~ *sexo* no escribo más poemas. ~~Creo que~~ *N*o soy precisa. De la trampa del lenguaje a la de la lengua. Diana, soy peligrosa: no estoy en el mundo. ~~En~~ *La* verdad, *Diana,* no me gusta tu abertura ni la de ninguna otra. ~~Sos tan bella, Diana, que supongo que organizarías más con un mancebo de pija caliente~~. Pero no hay muchas criaturas que hayan recibido el don del sexo del modo en que yo […] ~~No te~~ amo pero me calient*ás*, y esto, a vos que me amás, te hace sentir Angela de Foligno.[34] […] Me gusta echarte de espaldas y meterte dos o tres dedos en tanto tu culo – merecedor también el de uno de los dedos – da cuentas, por tu dolor, de mi identidad: soy la que conduce las posturas de un juego sexual interpretado por dos niñas ~~laberínticas~~ monstruos. Y como el dolor de tu culo me excita, también te excitás ~~por tu parte~~ y vas cediendo, princesita de la más

[34] A thirteenth century Italian woman who committed, confessed and atoned for a shameful sin.

> alta torrre [sic] del castillo de ~~mis~~ los sueños más depravados y candorosos, ~~vivos, vivos, vivos~~, ~~y sobre todo~~ *más* místicos, más peligrosos.

Associating their shared bed with a grave (version one) links lesbianism to death, but perhaps it is only a fixed lesbian identity that has this negativity, since in the revised version, which adds in the notion of varied sexual games, Pizarnik refers to the two of them as 'niñas ~~laberínticas~~ *monstruos*', recalling the poem 'Para Janis Joplin', where the poet positively places her trust in, precisely, 'una niña monstruo' (*Poesía*, 422).[35] 'La trampa del lenguaje' acts as shorthand for her earlier poetic aesthetic, which has now been substituted by the trap of the physical (and erotic), metonymically represented by the tongue, which composes a kind of poetry of the body: 'me hundís la lengua en las orejas hasta que siento que me decís un poema muy puro' (version one). Indeed the whole poem perhaps presciently expresses a writing of the body which will come to prominence with Hélène Cixous et al during the 1970s.[36] The princess in the highest tower recalls Pizarnik's published poetry, for example the last line of 'Formas' reads 'princesa en la torre más alta'(*Poesía*, 199), an image which Chávez Silverman analyses as 'hyperfeminized, enclosed in her fairytale lack of agency'.[37] It also encourages identification with Pizarnik's self-construction, if we look at her diary for 28 July 1962: 'tu memoria de princesa loca encerrada en tu torre de furia y de silencio' (*Diarios*, 244). This image, linked to dreams which are auto-censored from depraved to mystical, sits uneasily with the otherworldliness of lesbianism and death and with the adult sexual explicitness of the rest of the passage, most reminiscent of the activities of *La condesa sangrienta*, who—in her medieval castle—likewise derives her identity from causing pain.

From here onwards the first version features increasingly erotic descriptions of stimulation and orgasm, recalling the section 'El espejo de la melancolía' of *La condesa sangrienta*; interestingly, Molloy reads 'El espejo…' as 'one of the most *personal* pages of [Pizarnik's] work, one that might be seen both as an autobiographical statement and as an aesthetic program'.[38] Patricia

[35] For analysis of the monstrous, see Susana Chávez Silverman, 'Gender, Sexuality and Silence(s) in the Writing of Alejandra Pizarnik', in *Árbol de Alejandra*, 13-35 (pp. 29-31).
[36] Depetris detects a 'poética del cuerpo' in *La bucanera*, responding to Artaudian cruelty. 'Alejandra Pizarnik después de 1968', 74.
[37] 'Gender, Sexuality and Silence', 25.
[38] 'From Sappho to Baffo, 255.

Venti confirms such a reading, finding close textual links between this passage, *La condesa* and unpublished sections of Pizarnik's diary.[39] Seeing *La condesa*'s influence on this late unpublished erotic text confirms *La condesa*'s pivotal role in Pizarnik's poetic trajectory. All such explicit detail is largely censored in the shorter version of 'Diana', perhaps because here Pizarnik cannot hide behind a literary model, as she did with Valentine Penrose's *La comtesse sanglante*. However, the word 'aleteo', which in 'Harta del principio femenino' had been used with disgusted revulsion, is now in the first version of 'Diana' used positively to describe the poet's own erotic lesbian experience: 'vibro con ~~la vibración~~ *el aleteo* de nuestros clítoris' (box 7 folder 10).

One of the more graphic passages climaxes with the exclamation '*me* es tan difícil ~~el camino en el escollo d~~el safismo!', implicitly linking Sapphism with 'naufragio', a throwback to her poetry. This difficulty accords with Molloy's reading of *La condesa*, in which the fact that lesbian sexuality has to be imagined in its most violent and transgressive form indicates the degree to which Pizarnik represses it.[40] Indicative of this repression is the fact that 'me', linking the difficulty to her personal experience, is a later addition to the original less personal statement.

Stylistic censorship is also in operation. When trying to find the words to express orgasms, the poet says 'me desdoblo, ~~me destriplo~~.' Presumably 'me destriplo' is cut out because it veers towards the punning humorous mode of *La bucanera*, rather than to this text which is serious in its erotic intent (and indeed subsequently seeks legitimacy through allusion to that erotic classic, the Kama Sutra). Yet the kind of rhetorical play found in her early prose poems (such as 'Se cerró el sol, se cerró el sentido del sol, se iluminó el sentido de cerrarse', *Poesía*, 346) is acceptable here: 'dejo, me dejo, te dejo, te me dejo, que juegue*mos* ~~s~~ todos los roles ~~im~~posibles o no.' Note once again the uncertainty about what is possible and what is not, as with Moia's love ('mi imposible aun tanto posible'), but the emphasis here is clearly on shifting roles rather than assuming a fixed lesbian identity.

[39] Patricia Venti, *La dama de estas ruinas: un estudio sobre* La condesa sangrienta *de Alejandra Pizarnik* (El Escorial: Dedalus, 2008), 83-6.
[40] 'From Sappho to Baffo, 256-7.

The first version of 'Diana de Lesbos' finishes as follows, repeating the leitmotif of being not of this world, and having 'sapphic' adventures whilst not being categorizable as lesbians:

> me pongo triste puesto que no hay nada más trágico que las aventuras sáficas entre dos criaturas que no son lesbianas ~~en el sentido común del término.~~ *pues no son de este mundo.*
>
> Mi pequeña princesa, ~~yo sé que~~ te morís de amor por mí. ~~Pero~~ *Y*o, no. Nunca te haré daño, ~~esto~~ tenés que saberlo. Pero me ~~mataré~~ *iré* pronto, mi pequeñita. Adoro ~~tu~~ *nuestros* modos de ~~coger~~ *amarnos* pero espero mucho más de la oscura señora del túmulo y la casa de los muertos.
>
> *enero 1971*

The passage therefore ends by censoring the preceding sexual explicitness, replacing 'coger' with the more euphemistic and tender 'amarnos'. Such tenderness is nevertheless also subject to censorship, since this disappears from the later version. Aesthetically, Pizarnik finishes by reining herself back into her familiar territory of proximity to death, via the 'hyperfeminine' diminutive princess, in a funereal landscape like that of 'Los muertos y la lluvia' (*Prosa*, 43-44). She avoids the bluntness of 'me mataré' in favour of 'iré', which echoes poem 33 of *Árbol de Diana* ('me iré sin quedarme / me iré como quien se va', *Poesía*, 135) but also foreshadows a poem of 1972 which shows utter resignation and a radically split self: 'Todo ha sido demasiado y ella se irá. / Y yo me iré.' (*Poesía*, 433)

Censorship of 'este mundo': excluding the personal and particular

'mis propias fantasías, desligadas de todo detalle concreto' (*Diarios*, 465)

The problematic relationship to sexuality revealed in such unpublished texts, and the dissatisfaction with the restrictive gender demarcations of 'este mundo', parallel Pizarnik's resistance to 'this world' in terms of particular, identifiable details (hence her difficulties in writing sustained narrative prose). In a letter to Mandiargues, she claims to be '*Sans un amour continu, car j'ai voulut toute ma vie abolir "les bas fonds de la réalité"*' (box 6 folder 35). The word layout reveals her primary instinct for the abstract and universal poetic state (sans amour) before (reluctantly?) correcting to the more particular (sans *un* amour *continu*); this instinct is confirmed in wanting to eliminate the sordid details of life. As Sara Cohen observes, 'No deja de ser llamativo

que [Pizarnik] haya dejado tanto fuera del acceso de la palabra.'[41] In the published poetry, her enforced eliminations cover almost any detail which verges on the specific and individual. Proper names do occur as dedicatees, or in epigraphs but these tend to belong to universal culture (or occur only as initials). The exceptions generally have a clearly defined (and therefore in some sense 'public') relationship to Pizarnik, for example León Ostrov, Pizarnik's first psychoanalyst (*Poesía*, 47), or 'Y.Yván Pizarnik de Kolikovski, mi padre' (*Poesía*, 420). The Work (according to her aesthetic of the publishable) must be an object from which (almost) all traces of the speaking subject as an individual self are erased, almost asphyxiated (hence the proliferation of poetic images of stones in the poet's throat). Even within the context of linguistic excess which is *La bucanera*, where proper names abound, Pizarnik is still careful to censor those which are neither universal nor purely fictional; for example, she crosses out 'Anita B.' (presumably her friend Anita Barrenechea) and replaces her with the ludic fictional 'character', Bosta Watson.[42]

The contrast between this aesthetic which rigorously excludes the everyday and that of Pizarnik's 'recitas en prosa' (box 7 folder 38) could not be greater. These 90 or so pages of short prose pieces, whose titles (including various called 'Encuentro', 'El encuentro', 'Encuentros') reveal their literary heritage of the surrealist 'rencontre imprévue' (highlighted in Pizarnik's notes on Breton, box 8 folder 14), are almost all quasi-autobiographical. This opening of the floodgates of the personal and particular is surely a contributory factor to Pizarnik's withholding them from publication. Although in third person rather than first, their focus is always on the reactions of 'ella' to such mundane situations as life in a student residence, or looking for a room to rent. The longest, 'Otoño o los de arriba', refers to her neighbours mentioned in *Diarios* (442); she describes the situation in a letter to Mandiargues then adds a footnote 'j'ai fais sur cette histoire un conte' (box 6 folder 35). As well as venturing into autobiographical terrain, Pizarnik is clearly going beyond her own 'poeta maldita' aesthetic limits in pieces such as 'El Gran Cambio', which talks about a positive life change, waking early, going to breakfast like a normal student, and talking to other students about everyday things:

[41] Sara Cohen, *El silencio de los poetas: Pessoa, Pizarnik, Celan, Michaux* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2002), 54.
[42] See box 7 folder 1 and *Prosa*, 134; error introduced between manuscript and published version, which has 'Eatson'.

> Y ella se fue a su cuarto, aturdida, ebria, confusa, porque todo había sido tan fácil, las palabras habían salido de sus labios tan ligeras, tan sin cortejos fúnebres, que se preguntó si también ella no tendría posibilidades de vivir en este mundo. [...] dijo sí, dijo que era sí, y siempre diría sí. (box 7 folder 38)

Once again, the leitmotif 'en este mundo' is there, tempting Pizarnik with the possibility of this world beyond the aesthetic of linguistic failure, a world in which she can say yes in contrast to the 'dama pequeñísima' of 'Reloj', who says: 'NO' (*Poesía*, 183).

The many other short prose vignettes held in box 7 folder 38 are striking for the inclusion of particular details—place or street names such as 'el Arc de Triomphe', 'la Sorbonne', 'la rue Furstenberg' (all in 'En un principio…'), names of individuals—as we saw in the liminal text 'un ramo…'—such as Martín, Julio and Susana Thénon (in 'Tres en una motoneta'), and events such as a visit to 'un cabaret de fama dudosa […] porque lo frecuenta gente sexualmente indecisa' (also in 'Tres en una motoneta'). Pizarnik's published poetry, where 'en vano buscaremos […] algún indicio de esa estadía [en París]',[43] finds its *contracara* in this female *flâneur*, this 'errar todo el día por París' and 'Caminar, caminar […] junto al Sena' (box 7 folder 38). However, as we saw demonstrated in her anxious censorship of the new sexual voice, here too Pizarnik undergoes an internal struggle. Her earlier poetic ideals feel increasingly like a pose, but although this causes her distress, she persists in a certain reluctance to make concessions to the mundane and prosaic (which in this case would entail the indignity of 'bajar hasta el Self-service de al lado y comprar papas fritas'). Summing up her dilemma, she writes:

> Me sentía contenta. Me identificaba con Balzac y con Malte Brigge y con todos los que escribieron en una miserable piecita de un quinto piso de Paris. Sabía que mi identificación era infantil, que mi contento respondía a que veía y tocaba la imagen que me había hecho de mí misma cuando era una adolescente: sola, pobre, escribiendo y nada más. [...] Así me quería: despeñada sobre la hoja en blanco, deseosa sólo de lo bello, de hacer lo bello [...] Pero alguien en mí observaba y condenaba. […] "Estás huyendo, decía, te escapas, no te aceptas, no te aceptas imperfecta y con deseos como todo el mundo. Ni siquiera te aceptas el hambre, o la necesidad de amar. [...] con toda crueldad seleccionaste en tí y expulsaste lo que se parece a lo que tienen todos. (box 7 folder 38; 'Creo que me obligo…')

[43] Edgardo Dobry, 'La poesía de Alejandra Pizarnik: una lectura de *Extracción de la piedra de locura*', *Cuadernos hispanoamericanos* 644 (2004), 33-43 (p. 33).

So we see again why such pieces as the 'canto' to Martha Moia could not be published—it expresses all too clearly 'la necesidad de amar' which, as Pizarnik acknowledges, she forcibly banishes from her self-image, along with anything else that makes her part of this world.

One other aspect of the particular which is rigorously censored, even from her 'nueva poética', is that pertaining to the political. She believed that 'un poema político [...] no sólo es un mal poema sino una mala política', (*Prosa*, 308), and Grant observes that in the posthumously published version of *La bucanera*, 'few "real" political figures, and certainly no contemporary ones, are alluded to'.[44] Perón, the most obvious contemporary reference, was in fact present, but then censored from an early draft of 'La polka' in *La bucanera*:

> Domingo Peroné (inventor del pororó y del peroné, ~~dijo~~ reconoció Cojota haciéndole justicialicia) y su mujer Evita Bara, antigua cabaretera del generalife, como bien lo declaró vox lori […] Chiche Onganón, primo del Estaginita y madre de Juan Domingo Il-y-a (pas de quoi se vanter) (box 6 folder 43)

Perón becomes Peroné, a legbone (fibula), as well as inventor of maize-flowers (pororó). Cojota (derived from la Coja ensimismada, authorial alter-ego throughout *La bucanera*) sounds as if she is dressing down in flip-flops (ojotas), and does Perón 'justice' by alluding to the 'partido justicialista', yet subverts it through proximity to the topsy turvy world of Alicia (en el país de las maravillas), one of Pizarnik's private obsessions.[45] Evita's mythicized low-life origins are proclaimed by the voice of parrots instead of the *vox populi*, and the names of other political figures are similarly distorted—Onganía becomes Onganón, Illia is gallicized as 'Il-y-a', 'there is' (nothing to be proud of). Likewise, the following is cut:

> Vos, conserveta é mierda, sos idéntico a vos, peroneta de mierda, idéntico a vos, radidcaca de mierda, idéntico a vos, sucialista, y a vos comunosta democrista de mierda de mierda y a todos los que los parió y que son la miesma o la mierda de las mierdas (box 6 folder 43)

In this blackly humorous take on equality, all political persuasions are distorted; conservative, peronist, radical, socialist, communist, and democrat are all insistently linked to shit and dirt. They are made obscene in the strictly etymological sense: *caenum*, mud or filth (OED). Pizarnik's new

[44] 'A private revolution?', 70.
[45] See Fiona J. Mackintosh, 'La pequeña Alice: Alejandra Pizarnik and Alice in Wonderland', in *Fragmentos: Revista de Língua e Literatura Estrangeiras* (Florianópolis) 9:1 (1999), 41-55.

voices may permit aligning her with certain growing feminist, neobaroque or *neobarroso* trends, but she censors any tendency to become directly political.

Censorship by genre

para nosotros el 'ensayo de simulación' de enfermedades 'antisociales', reemplazaría ventajosamente a la balada, al soneto, a la epopeya, al poema sin pies ni cabeza y otros géneros caducos.[46]

I have reiterated how Pizarnik's critical reception, which consecrated the aesthetic epitomized in 'En esta noche, en este mundo', was one of the restrictive factors in her search for new voices and modes of expression. Pizarnik's rebellion against this paternalistic authority of literary critics is curiously channelled through resistance to the mother figure, with whom her relationship was admittedly difficult.[47] In an unpublished 9-page continuation of 'Helioglobo' from *La bucanera* (end of box 6 folder 45), we see how Pizarnik ferociously caricatures the mother, presenting her stereotypically as an uneducated Jewish immigrant, but then ventriloquizes her mother's voice to criticize herself and her work. This passage was cut, only appearing in one early draft of *La bucanera*:

> '¿De dónde nacieron sus padreses?' dijo la glücklije máme de Freudele, de Marxele y de Einsteinle.
> 'Ché, mame, ¿cuándo pensás cerrar esa putaboca que está metaparlar que me quemás delante de los compañeros de la Facultad?'
> '¿Y qué, pedase de mierde? ¿Te vergoinsanl tus pádresis? Si no gústante bastante buscate un general de la armierde nasionalishe. Así te hacées bien la promosionishe y hacés impácte con tu feia filosofíe doinde no se pega una cosa mit di otre cosa. ¡Un mish-mash! Leié tu Organe, leié tu Poétishe, leié la Morral & Nicht Cómique. ¡Pfé! ¿Por qué ponés títalej porno-cuashe, éi? Sos demasiade pornecusher, permití que mámele opine por tu bien, Arristétale, querride.'

This is part of a much more extensive passage—also cut—of punning 'Jewspeak', which could profitably be analysed purely for its Yiddish-inspired linguistic humour, as Evelyn Fishburn analyses Pizarnik's letters to Osías Stutman.[48] Fishburn highlights the 'void that [the] absence [of 'Jewspeak'] leaves in the humorous prose';[49] this absence is due to Pizarnik's relentless censorship of precisely this element from one version of *La bucanera* to the next. The passage could also be read in

[46] Paul Éluard and André Breton, *La inmaculada concepción*, translated by Pizarnik (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor, 1972), 25.
[47] Juan-Jacobo Bajarlía cites the insult 'mala hija, mujer de la calle' used of Pizarnik by her mother. *Alejandra Pizarnik: anatomía de un recuerdo* (Buenos Aires: Almagesto, 1998), 138.
[48] Evelyn Fishburn, 'Different Aspects of Humour and Wordplay in the Work of Alejandra Pizarnik', in *Árbol de Alejandra*, 36-59 (pp. 55-56).
[49] 'Different Aspects of Humour …', 57.

conjunction with various other unpublished pieces specifically addressing her Jewish identity, such as 'Fábula del coito' (box 7 folder 32), the continuation of 'Otoño o los de arriba' (box 7 folder 31).[50] However, the point here is that in projecting onto the mother figure this criticism of her work, Pizarnik oscillates between attacking perceived repression and revealing insecurities about (the reception of) her writing.[51] 'La Morral & Nicht Cómique' refers to Section 9 of the 'Índice ingenuo' to *La bucanera*, which is entitled 'Abstrakta o Moral and Nicht Cómike' (*Prosa*, 92). The allusion to Aristotle's *Organon* and *Poetics* reinforces the link with *La bucanera*, which includes among its characters 'el hada Aristóteles' (*Prosa*, 108), making it clear that the self-criticism is directed at *La bucanera* in particular, the very work from which the whole passage has subsequently been deleted. As the quotation underlines, not only the issue of writing in a pornographic mode, but also the chaotic nature of these prose texts ('un mish-mash') causes anxiety, leading to censorship.

The question of genre is recurrently problematic for Pizarnik. Writing extended prose confronts her with the need to develop and sustain larger narrative structures, which is something she finds difficult. One of her manuscript corrections to the section preceding that quoted above also reveals this generic ambiguity felt by her, as she refers to 'el ~~cuento~~ *~~texto~~* de Pizarnik' (box 6 folder 45), and this genre trouble recurs throughout the unpublished piece: 'Pero este cuento es como el siglo: un cambaleche' [sic]. The punning reference to Discépolo's famous 1935 tango 'Cambalache' underlines the chaotic and anarchic nature of her prose. Pizarnik received little literary encouragement for her generically unclassifiable texts (and frank disapproval from some friends such as Laure Bataillon [box 8 folder 21] and Cristina Campo [box 9 folder 1]), although Héctor Bianciotti does mention a proposed collection of 'textos inclasificables' as an enthusiastic response to Pizarnik's amusing description of her 'textículos' (box 8 folder 23). Pizarnik copies out a phrase

[50] In this piece, Pizarnik's self-positioning vis-à-vis her Jewish neighbours is uncertain: '¿Cómo imaginar que estos prósperos judíos que ni siquiera hablan en idish, son, en verdad, pobres inmigrantes que todavía no bajaron del barco?' 'para ellos, que se asustan ante la perspectiva de bajar en la gran metrópoli, ellos, venidos de Minsk o de Pinsk, ¿qué significó […] una escritora, que silba cada vez que pone un disco […] para participar de la música, para simular—también ella—que tiene una patria?' This recalls the previously-cited passage from 'Piedra fundamental' (*Poesía*, 265).

[51] This is also apparent in 'Leika' (box 6 folder 45), which appears in the 'Indice piola' (*Prosa*, 93) but was excluded from later drafts of *La bucanera*, despite being finished. It too contains a caricatured Yiddish mama, who the narrator-character defies: '"Cierre ese pico luso-napolitano, que el cuento es mío y si me canta les pongo una bomba de plástico a todos mis persopejes" dijo Alejandra Pizarnik'.

from Octavio Paz's *El arco y la lira* which lends a certain post-surrealist authority to this anxiety about genre: 'Si reducimos la poesía a unas cuantas formas—épicas, líricas, dramáticas—¿qué haremos con las novelas, los poemas en prosa y esos libros extraños que se llaman *Aurelia*, *Los cantos de Maldoror* o *Nadja*?' (box 8 folder 15). These 'strange books' named by Paz were all key texts in Pizarnik's 'legitimizing genealogy',[52] and none is easily classifiable in generic terms.

In order to try to legitimize her writing in prose, therefore, Pizarnik once again sought models on which to base her work as she had done previously with *La condesa sangrienta*: 'Único método de trabajo: tener delante un modelo' (*Diarios*, 480).[53] But she resents this dependency, saying 'me duele esconderme detrás de un libro para decir lo que yo quiero' (*Diarios*, 451) and therefore she censors traces of her source texts.[54] For example, in parallel to her essay 'Humor de Borges y Bioy Casares' on their book *Seis problemas para don Isidro Parodi*, we have Pizarnik's 'Microantología' (box 7 folder 26), a five-page collection of unattributed quotations, which are largely drawn precisely from Bustos Domecq (the pseudonym used by Borges and Bioy in this and other co-authored works). The stylistic assessment Pizarnik makes of *Seis problemas* could apply equally to her *La bucanera*: 'los personajes y los actos están y acontecen sólo por obra y gracia del lenguaje que los sustenta' (*Prosa*, 279), making it plausible that this mode of humour was a model for *La bucanera*, as Cristina Piña has suggested.[55] Indeed the word 'polígrafo' is used in the introduction to describe Bustos, which may have given Pizarnik the idea for *La bucanera*'s subtitle, *Hilda la polígrafa*.[56] Pizarnik censors the only explicit reference to her source in the 'Microantología'; under the subheading 'Un compadrito' she has crossed out the phrase '~~Típico personaje caro a Borges~~' (box 7 folder 26). So as with her 'palais du vocabulaire', which was a treasure trove of phrases from other writers which then were transmuted and incorporated invisibly into her own poetry, Pizarnik anthologizes these snippets of humorous prose in a quasi-

[52] See Miguel Dalmaroni, 'Sacrificio e intertextos en la poesía de Alejandra Pizarnik', *Orbis Tertius*, 1:1 (1996), 93-116.
[53] Regarding more general models, Depetris sees Antonin Artaud's *Le Théâtre et son double* as 'un referente medular' to Pizarnik's new aesthetic (70-74, p. 71).
[54] Elizabeth Zeiss sees this dynamic in terms of palimpsested texts which represent the 'literary tradition with which [Pizarnik] is in a conflictive relationship'. See 'The Subject Between Texts in Alejandra Pizarnik's Poetry' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 2001), 153.
[55] *Alejandra Pizarnik*, 193.
[56] 'Sus cuentos policiales descubren una veta nueva del fecundo polígrafo'. Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares, *Seis problemas para Don Isidro Parodi* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1984; 1st publ. Sur, 1942), 10.

autodidactical effort to learn the techniques of humourous prose (see *Diarios*, 446), but then covers her tracks.

Julio Cortázar is another prose model, the debt to whom Pizarnik obscures with an uneasy mixture of homage, parody and rejection.[57] There are similarities between Pizarnik's nonsense works and pieces such as Cortázar's 'La inmiscusión terrupta' from *Último Round*, whose protagonists 'la señora Fifa' and 'la Tota' call to mind Pizarnik's 'Santa Fifa' (*Prosa*, 189) or 'Fifina' (box 7 folder 19).[58] She borrows his term 'Textículo' from *Último round* and *La vuelta al día en ochenta mundos* for her 'El textículo de la cuestión' in 'La bucanera'.[59] Having reviewed his *Historias de cronopios y de famas*, she later tries writing 'Instrucciones para…' (box 5 folder 5; notebook dated 1970) as exemplified in the 'Manual de instrucciones' section of Cortázar's text.[60] Where Cortázar has the text 'Instrucciones para cantar', Pizarnik gives us merely the title 'Instrucciones para bostezar', and her equivalent of his 'Instrucciones para dar cuerda al reloj' (preceded by 'Preámbulo a las instrucciones para dar cuerda al reloj') is 'Instrucciones para escribir un manual de instrucciones', followed by the rebellious 'Instrucciones para recibir instrucciones para no escribir un manual de instrucciones'. This parodic homage continues when she alludes to his *Libro de Manuel* and its quasi-situationist group 'la joda' in *La bucanera*: 'Pericles y Chú juntaron sus ahorros y compraron un MANUAL PARA LLAMARSE MANUEL. Se diplomaron por carta. Un cuarto de día después, fundieron una fundición de enseñanza de la joda' (*Prosa*, 140).[61]

All is not homage, however. She makes a slightly mocking reference to Cortázar in the 'Yiddish mama' section discussed earlier, having 'mama' hold him up as an example to her of a serious boy who saves money and isn't embarrassed to write 'letters to mother' (perhaps a humorous reference to his short story 'Cartas de Mamá'):

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[57] See Florinda F. Goldberg, 'Alejandra Pizarnik, the Perceptive Reader' in *Árbol de Alejandra*, 91-109 (pp. 99-103).
[58] *Último Round* (1969; 16th edn 2004), vol. 2, 110-11.
[59] Cortázar borrowed 'textículo' from Raymond Queneau's *Exercices de style* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947). Pizarnik was also familiar with Queneau (*Prosa*, 279).
[60] See also material for this article in box 8 folder 15.
[61] According to his letters, by September 1970 Cortázar had already written some 200 pages of what would become *Libro de Manuel* (see letter to Graciela de Solá in April 1971); presumably Pizarnik knew of it.

> Podes salir con […] Julite Cortázar (¡chico tan serie! ¡cómo gana pero cómo ahorra en el Crédit Lyonais cada centavo! […] ¡Y es un siñor escritor! […] ¡Y no le vergoinsa ahumade, scribir 'Cartas a Mámele' (box 6 folder 45)

Humour aside, Pizarnik's jibe about money resentfully implies that Cortázar has somehow sold out as a writer. In her unpublished prose text 'Dos visitas', Pizarnik seems enviously to mock the kinds of rebellion associated with Cortázar's prose as ephemeral and inauthentic, perhaps as a way of justifying her own 'pure' poetic rebellion, her utterly apolitical 'volcánvelorio del lenguaje' (*Prosa*, 109). In 'Dos visitas', the narrator's friend Bebé is proud of her 'filiación: violencia, gritos, jazz, vértigo, beatniks, Henry Miller, la verdadera vida está ausente, los paseos a las tres de la mañana por el quai de Branly', which conjures up the Parisian atmosphere of Cortázar's *Rayuela* complete with translated reference to Rimbaud's *Une saison en enfer*. The narrator puts a superior, ironic distance between herself and such facile rebellion: 'Alguna vez la he acompañado: falsos edenes pequeñitos, paraísos minúsculos, pockets eden, le ciel dans votre poche, les anges dans votre sac' (box 7 folder 38) yet we note that Pizarnik censors what began as a very similar passage in her manuscript 'Historia del tío Jacinto', '~~je rencontre par azar le bazar de la rue du Regard en donde se hacinan lívidas muñecas abrazadas a puercoespines. Esto se llama: Paris by night o le soleil dans votre poche~~' with precisely those elements of the *flâneur* in Paris and 'le soleil dans votre poche' (box 7 folder 21). Her debt to Cortázar in her search for an authentic prose voice is thus obscured.

The evident unevenness of Pizarnik's prose texts in stylistic terms gives rise to uncertainty and self-criticism of her own powers as a prose writer. 'Horrible confusión en mis escritos. Todo a medio hacer. Poemas en verso. Poemas en prosa. Cuentos de humor. Cuentos sin humor. Diario. Textos "automáticos".' (*Diarios*, 328). This diary entry suggests that contrary to our previous conceptions of Pizarnik's working methods, she does even try automatic writing; indeed, the manner of developing the 'narratives' in *La bucanera* is clearly freely associative rather than logical. Breton and Éluard's *La immaculée conception*, which she translated, may have been a model here, particularly in the obsessive punning section 'Essai de simulation de la manie aigüe'. The unpublished text which begins 'por qué lleueve [sic] en forma tan mojigata?' (box 7, folder 34ª) is one of her most automatic, but even this reveals a censorious control: 'me salen idioticas frasezuelas

porwue me pica la existencia (dassein)' and it ends with the kind of self-questioning which also punctuates *La bucanera* (see *Prosa*, 133, 134): 'por que jodiste tanto tratando de dialogar, como si platón no hubiera existido para alejandrita del caúcaso???'. A similar self-critical voice is present in almost all of her efforts at prose. Very near the beginning of 'Otoño o los de arriba', she reveals her anxiety about the genesis and selective detail of a quasi-realist narrative: 'Mi punto de partida (mentira: no tengo ninguno; o esta ansiedad, acaso; o esta inminencia por decirlo todo sabiendo que de ningún modo, etc, etc)' (box 7 folder 31).

This aspect of her self-editing stems from desperation associated with writing, which harks back to the ineffability topos. The censorious self becomes a block to writing, as we see in 'El corredor', where at first the hospital whiteness of the corridor in the student residence appalls and frightens her, but gradually it becomes a space of liberation from these debilitating internal struggles:

> En él [el corredor] me hacía adulta, mi espíritu se elevaba, mi fantasía irracional se calmaba, mis imágenes, mis alucinaciones, todo se reunía en un orden hermoso. Pero era sólo en el corredor. Cuando llegaba a mi pieza ya no había más orden. Volvía a la de siempre, a las de siempre, a las que están en mí y pelean a muerto todo el día y toda la noche. (box 7 folder 38)

Pizarnik frequently comments on artists who need to be in extreme situations to be able to work, giving Nerval and Baudelaire as examples: 'Necesitan de perspectivas catastróficas pour donner tout leur mesure' [sic] (box 8 folder 2, 'Le forçat du vouloir'). Pizarnik's own catastrophic perspective comes from the severe limitation of her own poetic boundaries: 'Yo moriré del método poético que me creé para mi uso y abuso' (*Diarios*, 335). She remains reluctant to abandon this restricted perspective and its associated 'Malte Brigge' lifestyle, fearing loss of poetic integrity. This dilemma is worked through in a prose narrative where, after grudgingly accepting her Tío Alain's offer of financial assistance, she dreams about being barred entry to a house with the words 'Esta casa es para los desnudos y los desposeídos' (box 7 folder 38). Presumably this is her former 'casa del lenguaje', from which her new bourgeois financial security has now banished her.

Although Depetris is right to question the normative reading of Pizarnik's late works as mere 'incapacidad poética',[62] it is nevertheless undeniable that Pizarnik's fears about loss of poetic integrity within her 'nueva poética' are not always unfounded, since many tropes or images which worked well within the 'perspectiva catastrófica' become distended, unconvincing, even *cursi* when expanded in prose. For example, the topos of orphanhood (see *Poesía*, 191, 430) becomes a journalist's sob-story in 'El reportaje': 'Yo no me olvido que lloré diez años todas las noches, en el asilo de huérfanos, lo siniestro, lo sórdido, lo terrible de una soledad no solitaria'. The notion of 'partir', watch-word from 'La última inocencia' onwards (*Poesía*, 61 and 433, 443) resurfaces in 'Título', but the zeal for leaving loses its existential angst, rapidly becoming an exaggerated tropical fantasy:

> Mirábamos los barcos. El olor del agua podrida era una promesa de aventuras 'como las que cuentan los libros para niños'. 'Algún día nos iremos' me dijo Johncito. 'Nos iremos a los trópicos, a Europa, al Oriente. [...] Iremos, nos internaremos en las selvas. Tendrás todos los salvajes que quieras.' La posibilidad de hacerme desvirgar por un individuo cubierto de plumas y de tatuajes me colmó de alegría. (box 7 folder 38)

This fantasy concludes with the imagined 'maravillosa ceremonia' of her deflowering, in front of the whole tribe: 'me penetra, yo gozo tanto que rompo la noche con mis gritos […] Luego me regala un objeto mágico o un animal sagrado, algo para ampararme.' Like a comic-strip version of her earlier published poetry, the elements are there but utterly changed in tone, register and impact. It is like a distorted echo of 'Reconocimiento': 'Tu hiciste de mi vida un cuento para niños / en donde naufragios y muertes / son pretextos de ceremonias adorables' (*Poesía*, 161).

The wealth of prose experimentation contained in Pizarnik's unpublished manuscripts is amply eloquent of her aesthetic dilemmas as she sought new modes of expression. Pizarnik could not benefit from the reassurance of hindsight that some of her later prose work would finally find its place in 'authorized discourse',[63] so she experienced the anguish of censoring that which she felt was unpublishable, thereby betraying her new voices. María Negroni's images of the besieged medieval castle and of an 'ars impoética' communicate this dilemma very vividly.[64] 'Este mundo' for Pizarnik

[62] 'Alejandra Pizarnik después de 1968', 64.
[63] Grant, 'A Private Revolution?', 72.
[64] María Negroni, *El testigo lúcido: la obra de sombra de Alejandra Pizarnik* (Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo, 2003), 11, 15.

spells established gender politics and literary modes; an other world would be one without restrictive gender roles, where she could write the body in its ambivalent advances and retreats from lesbianism, with freedom of genre, committed only to Michel Leiris' notion of the 'género mayor' of personal risk and authenticity.[65] Yet 'este mundo' also refers to the mundane, the particular and everyday with which she tries to compromise in her 'recitas', only to reject it in the brutal linguistic play which is *La bucanera*. What emerges through the unpublished material studied here (a fraction of the Princeton archive), is that in the late sixties and up to her death in 1972, Pizarnik subjects herself to rigorous self-editing and censorship, whilst—and as a direct consequence of—going beyond her previous self-imposed limits in terms of genre, reference to sexuality, and to the concrete and particular. What she is wrestling with, having been the 'poeta de lo inefable', is her increasing need for a 'nueva poética' which will express her tortuously evolving and contradictory notions of the literary and of her own ambivalent (sexual) identity in an authentic way. But in her literary context, with the texts she has as models, and with the largely hostile reception of friends and literary critics alike, there is as yet no place for such expression. Pizarnik therefore simultaneously censors 'unfitting' aspects of her 'nueva poética', whilst resenting and writing against her own censorship.

[65] Michel Leiris, 'De la literatura considerada como una tauromaquia', translated by Alejandra Pizarnik and Silvia Delpy, *Sur*, 315 (1968), 12-21 (p. 20).